

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MANAMA 001558

SIPDIS

STATE FOR ECA/PE/V/F, NEA/PPD, NEA/PI, NEA/ARPI, PA/SCP

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PHUM OEXC SCUL KPAO BA

SUBJECT: Citizen-Teacher Ambassadors Reach Bahraini Educators and Youth with Message of Youth Empowerment and Civic Participation

Summary

1. (U) Youth empowerment and civic participation were the core messages of a three-day visit by ECA Citizen Ambassadors, nationally recognized award winning American teachers Shannon C'de Baca and Linda Plattner. The Citizen Ambassadors visited six Bahraini public schools and met with over 400 students and nearly 300 teachers and education leaders in events that included school assemblies, professional workshops, technology demonstrations, and media appearances. The visit and press coverage significantly advanced mission goals by opening dialogue with key constituencies in the Ministry of Education and youth societies, strengthening relationships with existing education partners, and crystallizing messages of youth empowerment and civic participation directly with public school students. END SUMMARY.

First of a Kind Partnership with Bahrain Public Schools

2. (U) The Citizen Ambassador visit created a unique opportunity for outreach to youth and teachers in Bahraini public schools. The keystone of the program included visits to six public schools. Partnering schools organized school assemblies where the Citizen Ambassadors engaged youth on subjects such as planning for future careers, organizing youth groups, and education and life in America. The assemblies culminated in the presentation of Shared Futures backpacks to the students, presented by the Citizen Ambassadors and US Embassy parents. Following each assembly the Citizen Ambassadors held a roundtable discussion with teachers from the school to discuss techniques for developing youth leadership and engaging parents and community in schools.

Messages Shared with Education Leaders and Youth

3. (U) The themes of youth empowerment and civic engagement ran throughout the three-day program as Citizen Ambassadors engaged key educational policy leaders and professional educators in workshops and discussions. The program included:

- A workshop with 30 social studies teachers selected from 30 different Bahraini high schools to discuss strategies in civic education, student leadership, and project based learning. Audience members indicated they would bring the ideas to their home schools to share with other social studies teachers.

- A youth empowerment workshop with the Bahrain Youth Forum, the most prominent youth activist society in Bahrain. The workshop focused on strategies for organizing and securing broad support for the organization's Youth Agenda, recently presented to the King.

- Two workshops and technology demonstrations with the University of Bahrain Department of E-Learning and the Ministry of Education's King Hamad Schools of the Future project. Each of these emphasized the power of internet and computer technology as an information resource for students, and offered strategies for using technology to foster communication with students outside Bahrain.

- A roundtable discussion with the leaders of local NGOs and institutions devoted to youth empowerment and education, including INJAZ/Junior Achievement (entrepreneurship education), GLOBE Bahrain (science education), and the Court of the Crown Prince (youth leadership and volunteerism).

- A discussion with prominent English language teachers on the subject of building teachers' associations.

4. (U) In all events, the Citizen Ambassadors made individual and personal connections with many of the students and educators they encountered. In the first week

after the visit, one of the Citizen Ambassadors received 85 emails from contacts she had met. Follow-up activities will include distributing science kits from American NGOs to selected schools, connecting contacts with online resources for professional development, and connecting Bahraini students with American counterparts by email.

Press Coverage

15. (U) Local print and broadcast media were invited to attend a school visit, followed by a roundtable discussion with the Citizen Ambassadors. The event was covered in all six Arabic and English-language Bahraini dailies and was a community news feature on Bahrain TVs Bab Al-Bahrain evening news program. (Comment: This is only the second time Bahrain TV has carried a US Embassy event.) Each publication highlighted the program themes while emphasizing a different aspect of the program activity. For example, Al-Meethaq, Bahrain TV, and the Gulf Daily News focused on the presentation of Shared Futures backpacks to students. Al-Wasat reported heavily on the technology demonstrations. Bahrain Tribune discussed student exchanges and study abroad opportunities. Akhbar Al-Khaleej highlighted a workshop with the Bahrain Youth Forum.

16. (U) Post thanks ECA for offering and supporting this excellent program. The visit helped focus and intensify public attention on youth empowerment and civic participation. The program enabled post to strengthen ties with existing education partners as well as forge new relationships with target youth constituencies. ECA support in pre-planning and throughout the visit ensured a successful and substantive program. Post looks forward to working with ECA on similar programs in the future.

MONROE